

Identification of the Visual Representations of Heroic Concepts in Illustrations of the Battle Councils Scenes of the Great Mongol Shahnameh

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Abstract

Introduction: Some myths, such as epic heroes, are created as models to demonstrate appropriate paths to success. The myth of heroism is among the most common and well-known myths all over the world, from ancient Roman and Greek mythology to the Far East and even primitive tribes today. It represents an ideal embodiment of a demigod and a powerful being with great physical strength who battles the devil in various forms such as demons, dragons and serpents and saves his people from death and destruction. The hero and his worldview play an important role in shaping the epic content. The art of painting, when positioned alongside literary concepts, describes the meanings and concepts in a detailed and clearly visible way, through its visual capabilities and representational qualities. In the illustrations of battle councils of the Great Mongol Shahnameh, the painter uses visual elements and possibilities to express, narrate and represent space and original scenes to convey hidden concepts. Due to the national identity, the painter perceives himself as an heir and while remaining loyal to the themes, he moves beyond them and portrays the meanings of heroism at the core of the epic.

Purposes & Questions: The purpose of this research is to examine and analyze the illustrations of the battle councils of the Great Mongol Shahnameh to investigate the relationship between the visual features of the illustrations and the heroic themes of the Shahnameh and to identify visual equivalents to achieve suitable visual patterns in this period. This research, while outlining the motifs of heroism in the Shahnameh and exploring them in the illustrations of the battle councils, seeks to answer the following questions 1-What factors are effective in choosing the type of visual qualities and the method of displaying the elements of heroism in visual form? 2-In each illustration, which technique or visual quality selected by the painter plays the most significant role to show the concept of heroic elements is more specific?

Methods: The present research is qualitative and fundamental in terms of its direction and purpose. The method of data collection is library-based, and the interpretational method is descriptive-analytic. The images are carefully selected from among the battle councils based on the types of battles in Persian epic literature, which include: Hand-to-hand battles: 1- The depiction of Rustam shooting Esfandiar in the eyes 2- The battle between Iskandar and Fur. 3- The battle between Ardeshir and Bahman son of Ardashir. Battles with dragons: 1- Fereydon testing his sons 2- The battle between Iskandar and his companions with the dragon 3- The battle between Bahram Gur and the dragon. Massive battle: 1- Fighting Rashnavad with the Romans. 2- The battle between Iskandar's army and the Indian army. Battle with huge animals: 1- Alexander's battle with a rhinoceros. 2- Bahram's battle with a wolf. The images are analyzed and interpreted according to the principles of visual literacy, and then

the visual qualities used to show the hero, and the elements of heroism are identified.

Findings & Results: Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that: the type of battle affects choosing the type of heroism and the type of visual qualities used or the manner of depiction. For example, in a mass battle, courage, strength and violence are more obvious. Bahram is depicted with a dragon and a wolf, emphasizing the presence of Divine Farrah. While in a battle with a dragon or a huge animal, the emphasis is on lineage or the possession of divine attributes and going into battle as a solitary figure. Among the visual qualities in the paintings, the hero is placed in the closest plane or in the focal points of the frame. The overall results of the research indicate that: the type of battle, either one-on-one or group-based, has a significant impact on choosing the theme of heroism and the visual quality that manifests it, and the most prominent element of heroism depicted in paintings is courage. Despite the diversity in the execution of paintings and the number of artists involved in illustrating the Great Mongol Shahnameh, but it appears that the most obvious quality or visual technique visible in the martial scenes analyzed in this research is the selection of compositions appropriate to the type of battle and the arrangement of various elements in the frame according to the position of the hero and the use of different color contrasts, including cold, warm, and complementary schemes, are to portray the hero and the elements of the hero as best as possible.

Keywords

Heroism motifs ; The Great Mongol Shahnameh ; Battle councils ; Visual representation ; Illustration ; Visual aspects

⊕ References



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